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The New Amberola **GRAPHIC**

**Spring
Issue**

April, 1993
(mailed early June)

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Auctions!*

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April, 1993
(Spring)

The New Amberola Graphic

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Editor's Notes

Same old problems with delays; if it isn't one thing, it's another.

When our winter issue finally went out, we were surprised that 999 copies had been mailed. The very next day a new subscription came in, putting us exactly at 1000! Net growth is always slow, as we do lose some people along the way. However, it is gratifying (if not a little frightening) to know that readers have now put us over 1000.

It was our original intention to base advertising on the basis of 4¢ per page per subscriber. At this point, though, we do not foresee the need to increase rates to \$40.00 per page, at least for the immediate future.

Please continue to support the many fine advertisers found in the Graphic.

- M.F.B.

readers did not receive the last issue because they failed to notify us of a change in their address.

Don't let this happen to you! Let us know when you move (second class mail does not get forwarded automatically).

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Emile Berliner, Buffalo Bill, and You

Paul Charosh

During October 1897, The Cosmopolitan included a three-page advertising supplement placed by Emile Berliner's sales agents, the National Gramophone Company. It appeared in the form of a three-page "article" by Cleveland Moffett titled "Through the Needle's Point". It describes the gramophone "as simple and compact as a music-box," and its "sound-records" as "practically indestructible," consisting of performances by "the greatest artists of the day" and "the best that the city has -- those much advertised entertainers from the music halls and Paris, whose enormous salaries are told of in the newspapers."

The description of the Gramophone and its records is accurate, or at least reasonable; the assertion about the company's roster of artists is not. At this time, only two performers enjoying major stage careers had recorded for Berliner: Maurice Farkoa and Frank Daniels. Copies of Farkoa's "Laughing Song" (#1302 and #1302y, 8 May 1896) are known by collectors today; no one acknowledges possession of the discs by Daniels. It is true that Sousa's Band and its members began recording for the Gramophone in 1897, but in general, Berliner discs at this time are of those enjoying only modest careers, and some were so insignificant they cannot be traced today.

But before the year ended, Berliner induced a number of prominent entertainers and personalities to record; and by February 1898, advertising announced discs by "the three best-known public speakers in America" -- Chauncey M. Depew, Dwight L. Moody, and Robert G. Ingersoll. Later advertisements boasted discs by other celebrities: Joseph Jefferson, Maggie Mitchell, Rev. T. deWitt Talmage, Jessie Bartlett Davis, Ada Rehan, Mme. Janauschek, W. H. Crane and Marshall P. Wilder. Curiously, none appear in extant Gramophone catalogues. Specimens of some, along with others not mentioned in cited advertisements, survive in archives and private collections. A partial list of "celebrity discs" recorded between December 1897 and May 1898 appears below:

catalogue number	recording date	artist	title
525x	12 May '98	James T. Powers	<u>The Geisha</u> : Chin Chin Chinaman
552y,z	3 May '98	Jessie Bartlett Davis	<u>Robin Hood</u> : Oh, Promise Me
583	3 May '98	Jessie Bartlett Davis	O Genevieve [sic]
662	17 Jan '98	Dwight L. Moody	Sermon on the Mount
693	7 Jan '98	Chauncey Depew	from his speech on Forefather's Day
694	7 Jan '98	Chauncey Depew	from the Statue of Liberty oration
695	31 Dec '97	Robert G. Ingersoll	On Liberty
696	[?]	Chauncey Depew	A Story at a College Dinner
697	31 Dec '97	Robert G. Ingersoll	On Hope
698z	27 Dec '97	Joseph Jefferson	<u>Rip Van Winkle</u> : The Toast
699	4 Jan '98	Joseph Jefferson	<u>Rip Van Winkle</u> : The Reverie
1832	4 May '98	George B. Frothingham	Man O'Warsmen
3020	3 May '98	Jessie Bartlett Davis, W.H. MacDonald	<u>The Serenade</u> : Don Jose of Sevilla
4266-68	7 May '98	Henry Clay Barnabee, George B. Frothingham, Helena Frederick	<u>The Serenade</u> : Trio (three verses)
5009	8 Apr '98	Rev. T. deWitt Talmage	Sermon on the Mount
5010	8 Apr '98	Rev. T. deWitt Talmage	The Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm
5011	8 Apr '98	Rev. T. deWitt Talmage	"Home"
5014	20 Apr '98	W. Cody ("Buffalo Bill")	Sentiments on the Cuban Question
5015	20 Apr '98	Ada Rehan	1: Viola in 12th Night; 2: Rosalind in "As You Like It"
5016z	[?]	Ada Rehan	1: Katherine; 2: The Country Girl

Joe Jefferson
Maggie Mitchell
C. M. Depew
T. DeWitt Talmage
Jessie Bartlett Davis
Ada Rehan
Mme. Janauschek
Sousa
Robert Ingersoll
W. H. Crane
Marshall P. Wilder

Information on the above discs is incorporated into a larger, unpublished discography of all discs recorded by Berliner for release in this country. I began assembling this information over twenty years ago, and expect to publish it soon. Unfortunately, few complete or cumulative catalogues of Berliner Gramophone Records exist today; and in any event, they do not include take symbols (e.g., z, y, x, etc.) and recording dates. Therefore, I depend on private collectors to provide information from their own holdings. Do you own any American Berliners? -- even one? Would you like to help? Write to me at: 224 Beach 141 Street, Belle Harbor, New York 11694. I will be very pleased to hear from you.

The Early Victor Imported Recordings

by Michael W. Sherman

In April, 1903, The Victor Talking Machine Company put on sale twenty-five records pressed from matrices imported from Europe. These had been recorded the previous year by their British affiliate, The Gramophone and Typewriter Company, and inaugurated the famous Red Seal series, which endures today. The initial offering of Red Seals (numbered in the "5000" series) contained operatic selections from the greatest stars of Europe. Enrico Caruso legendary 1902 Milan sessions were represented in eight records, Emma Calvé's soprano solos from Carmen in two and the Italian tenor Fernando De Lucia appeared on four records he made in Milan. London recordings by Pol Plançon, Antonio Scotti and Suzanne Adams completed Victor's first menu of Red Seal records.

Later that month, Victor opened a small studio in Carnegie Hall and with the aid of Ada Crossley and Zellie DeLussan, began a domestically-recorded Red Seal series. For the first five years though, Victor's imported series bore unique labels and numerical series. In *The Collector's Guide to Victor Records*, I discussed some of these differences and illustrated a number of labels, but as the focus of the book was on the domestic offerings, the imported series received peripheral treatment at best. Due to the musical and historical significance of the early imported recordings, I have prepared a more thorough and structured outline of the 1903-1908 period, illustrating known label variations and assigning approximate pressing dates. For the sake of consistency, I have employed the basic numbering scheme introduced in *The Paper Dog*, and continued in *The Collector's Guide*. This explains the use of the Roman numeral "IV" which begins the outline.

Two points are important to stress at the beginning. The first is that while most collector interest is focused on the imported Red Seal series, Black labeled recordings in both 10" and 7" sizes were imported as well. These at first shared the "5000" series with the Red Seals, but in October 1903, most were split into the 61000 and 51000 blocks respectively. The second is that while these records are often referred to as "imported," they were pressed in Camden, and sold exclusively in North and South America. Only the recordings were made in Europe.

Needless to say, while absolute perfection remains a goal in research projects of this nature, it is seldom, if ever,

achieved. I welcome any corrections or criticism, so that future efforts in this area will be closer to that elusive goal.

IV. TRADEMARK LABEL (MONARCH RECORD)

A. Without "IMPORTED" on label.

1. First Typeface and Trademark April 1903 - May 1903

The initial release of twenty five records used a red colored label, like the G&T releases of 1902. The name "MONARCH RECORD" appeared in large letters across the center, using the original typeface characterized by parallel legs on the "M" in "MONARCH" and balanced upper and lower strokes on the "C". Around the top rim, the words "MADE IN EUROPE BY THE GRAMOPHONE & TYPEWRITER LIMITED FOR SALE IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA ONLY" appeared. The word "LIMITED" was printed in capital letters. The trademark was shaded beneath Nipper and the gramophone, but the area between them was not shaded. (Figure IV.A.1.) On the back side of the record, the "Recording Angel" logo of G&T appeared around the center hole. The logo was engraved into the stamper, and therefore appeared raised on the reverse of the record.

The catalog numbers began a 5000 series to differentiate them from the conventional domestic recordings, whose catalog numbers had begun with "1" three years earlier, and had reached approximately #2000 by the spring of 1903.



Figure IV.A.1. Spring 1903 Red Seal
Note early-style trademark and typeface.

2. Revised Typeface and Trademark
May 1903 - July 1903

In the spring of 1903, the main typeface was modified. The "M" in "MONARCH" now had slanted legs and the "C" showed a thicker stroke in the lower portion of the letter. At the top rim, the word "Limited" was now printed with lower-case letters. The trademark was also slightly changed, with unbroken shading now appearing beneath Nipper and the gramophone. (Figure IV.A.2.)



Figure IV.A.2. Summer 1903 Red Seal

- B. With "IMPORTED" on label.
1. "MADE IN EUROPE..." around the top of the label.
 - a. "Regular-style" trademark.
July 1903 - October 1903

In the summer of 1903, the word "IMPORTED" was added to the label, appearing twice in large letters, flanking the trademark. (Figure IV.B.1.a.) The 5000 series continued, eventually reaching #5127. Remember, this series was also used on imported 7" and 10" Black label pressings.

- b. "Puppy-style" trademark.
October 1903 - Early 1904

In the fall of 1903, a new engraving of the trademark appeared which depicted Nipper equal in height to the gramophone's horn. In previous versions, he had been shown looking more "mature," and taller than the top of the horn. The lettering

in the word "IMPORTED" was changed to a large, san-serif typeface. (Figure IV.B.1.b.)



Figure IV.B.1.a. Fall 1903 Red Seal
The last style of the "5000" series.

As a part of the new catalog numbering system implemented in October 1903, the 5000 series Red Seals were assigned new numbers in a 91000 series block. Black labels formerly in the 5000 series were renumbered into the 61000 series and the rare 7" imports received the 51000 block.



Figure IV.B.1.b.
Late 1903 - Early 1904 Red Seal
Note the completely new-style trademark.

6.

2. "RECORDED IN EUROPE BY THE GRAMOPHONE & TYPEWRITER LTD. FOR SALE IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA ONLY" around the top of the label. Early 1904 - Early 1905

In early 1904, the note at the top substituted the word "RECORDED" for "MADE" [IN EUROPE] reflecting an agreement between Victor and G&T. This term was more accurate, since the records so-labeled were really pressed, or made in Camden, New Jersey. Only the recorded master was imported from Europe. (Figure IV.B.2) On the reverse, a licensing and price sticker was applied. During this period, all bear the January 1, 1904 date.

Red Seals continued to be listed in the 91000 block (91000-91065) though the new \$5.00 Tamagno records were assigned to the 95000 block (95001-95011).



Figure IV.B.2. The last style entitled "MONARCH RECORD". 1904 - Early 1905

V. GRAND PRIZE LABEL (VICTOR RECORD)

A. "RECORDED IN EUROPE..." around the top of the label.

1. "Puppy-style" trademark.

Early 1905 - 1906

In early 1905, the 10" imported series labels lost the title "MONARCH RECORD" along with their domestically-recorded counterparts. All record sizes (including the 12" DELUXE RECORDS) were now labeled "VICTOR RECORD". The "puppy-style" trademark continued in use but the two large words "IMPORTED" were dropped. (Figure V.A.1.)

Red Seal imported recordings continued to use the 91000 and 95000 blocks and Black label imports used the 51000, 61000 and 71000 blocks for 7", 10" and 12" pressings respectively. The imported Melba recordings were numbered in a 12" 95000 block, (95012-95028) and received unique

mauve-colored labels.



Figure V.A.1. "VICTOR" replaces "MONARCH"

2. "Modified" trademark 1906-1907

In 1906, a substantially revised engraving of the trademark was introduced. Nipper was returned to his former glory, once again looking down into the horn of the gramophone. The name "VICTOR" appeared on the side of the gramophone and the phrase "HIS MASTER'S VOICE" is imbedded in the shading beneath the trademark. The U.S. patent registration is shown below the trademark. (Figure V.A.2.)

New series (the 10" 94000 & 12" 95000) along with unique label designs were employed for the imported Melba and Patti recordings. The conventional imported recordings continued to use the 91000 block.



Figure V.A.2. Modified Trademark 1906-07.

B. "AWARDED FIRST PRIZE BUFFALO, ST. LOUIS and PORTLAND EXPOSITIONS" at top of label. "GRAND PRIZE" around center hole. 1907 - Early 1909

Major changes occurred in mid-1907, as the imported series adopted a label design similar to the domestic series. Gone from the label was any indication of their European origin. In fact, the matrix number and a small crown following the catalog number stamped into the runoff area provided the only evidence of an imported recording visible on the front side of the record. (Figure V.B.) On the back side, the recording angel logo remained, and the license sticker continued to indicate an imported recording.



Figure V.B. Very little now distinguished the imported recordings. 1907 - 1909.

Catalog numbering series changes during this period also occurred, as the Black label 61000 and 71000 block recordings were moved to Red Seal. A 92000 block was set up for 12" Red Seal pressings. New 52000 and 58000 blocks were set up for 10" and 12" Black label imports respectively.

In early 1909, with the introduction of the Patents label, both the recording angel logo and the license notice disappeared from the back of the record. All that remained to distinguish the imported recordings was the visible matrix number and embossed crown in the run-off area. Separate imported catalog number series continued to exist, but imported recordings now also appeared in domestically-recorded Red Seal catalog number series.

While for reasons stated earlier, it is the early Red Seal imports which have been

the focus of collectors' attention for years, the early imported Black labels are, in my experience, even scarcer. I have no idea on what original sales figures were, but I think it's safe to assume the mortality rate for the early Black label imports was almost certainly higher than for the Red Seals. Shown below is a rare "5000" series Black label import, circa 1903.



Figure IV.A.2. A Black label import dating from mid 1903.

It has become almost axiomatic for me to remind readers that the key to the complete Victor story lies in hundreds of collections around the world. Only through the research and cooperation of dedicated collectors everywhere can missing pieces of the puzzle be found and put in their proper place. Readers finding label variations not mentioned in this article, or errors of any kind are urged to contact me through the New Amberola Graphic.

Readers desiring further information on domestic Victor Records are referred to *The Collector's Guide to Victor Records*, a 1992 work I authored which is available directly from me, as well as other dealers in antique phonograph literature. See the advertisement in this issue for ordering information.

Coming: A 1904 visit to the Victor Talking Machine Company's plant!



Jack Kapp

The Most Successful A & R Man of His Era

The designation Artist and Repertoire (A & R) came into the record vocabulary during the nineteen thirties. Before this designation, the person in charge of recruiting talent for a record label was called the "Recording Director," "Recording Supervisor," "Manager of Recording Laboratories," "Musical Director," etc. Whatever the title, it was most always in addition to other duties. Today A & R personnel are not only the bread and butter of a record organization but are highly structured and within departments so named, if with a major company. No matter how technically advanced a company may be, if its grooves do not contain what is in vogue, it will not be successful for long as a major label.

During the early thirties when times were somewhat desperate, selling a record at seventy-five cents for three minutes a side was difficult indeed, and with radio coming along the public had something new to turn to for home entertainment, at a cost agreeable for most everyone. "Who Needs Records" was heard in more than one quarter. It took the beginning of the end of the Great Depression before a turnaround was in sight, and the end of World War II for the industry to really prosper.

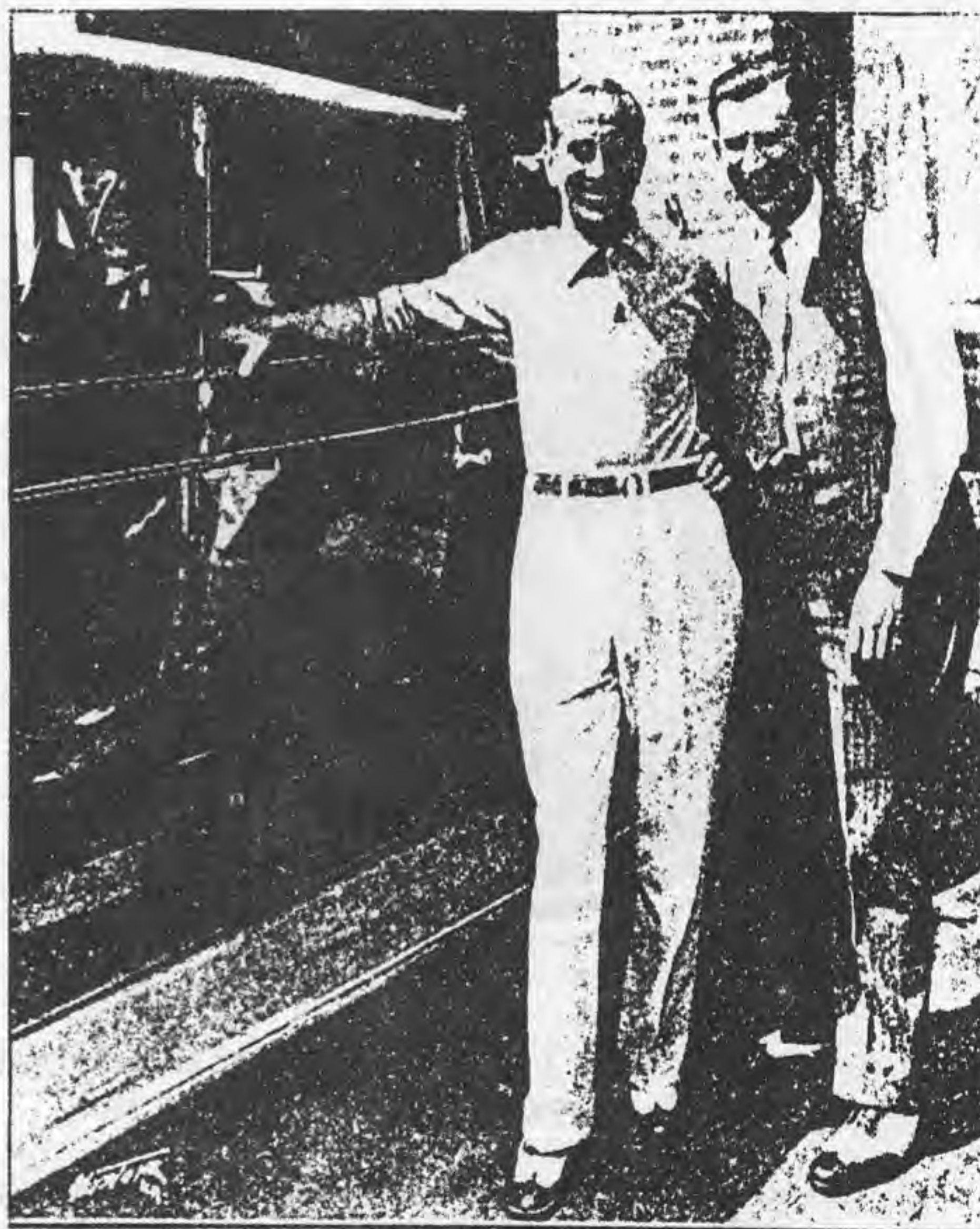
The most successful A & R executive of his era was Jack Kapp, who was born into the record business. He began as a part-time shipping clerk for Columbia, at the age of fourteen at \$5.00 per week. His father was a salesman for the Chicago branch of Columbia who peddled records door-to-door, taking and delivering record orders and supplies for the retail shops in the area. After graduating high school he received a full-time position in Columbia's order department. While working for Columbia, Jack and his brother David ran a record mail order business, catering primarily to minority clientele.

When the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company purchased the Vocalion label from the Aeolian Company in 1925, Jack was hired by Brunswick and put in charge of Vocalion's "race" section, operating from Brunswick's Chicago branch. Kapp's knowledge of the records, artists, merchandising and all aspects of the business was quickly appreciated; he also served as talent scout and sales promoter for Brunswick.

Kapp's big break came in 1928 when he arranged for Al Jolson to record "Sonny Boy" and "There's a



Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," to be issued as a single disk, Brunswick catalog number 4033. This phenomenal sale for 1928 (Russell Sanjek is quoted as saying "Jolson's recording of 'Sonny Boy' for Brunswick sold over a million copies.") advanced him to manager of the entire Brunswick popular catalog.



Al Jolson and Jack Kapp

In April 1930, Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. purchased the Brunswick radio, phonograph and record business primarily because of Vitaphone, a system in which a 16 inch industrial record was synchronized to a theatrical motion picture projector, resulting in sound with motion pictures. This system did not take hold, while the commercial record division was losing money. In December 1931, the Brunswick Radio Corp., owned by Warner Bros., licensed the American Record Corp. (ARC) to form the Brunswick Record Corp. and continue the Brunswick commercial record business. Jack Kapp went along as manager of the record operation, together with E. F. Stevens as record and sales manager, and Milton Rackmil of the accounting department.

The record industry in 1932 consisted of Victor, Columbia and Brunswick as the major labels with very few others far behind. Kapp kept Brunswick at the top of the popular record pole, such as it was, or at least neck and neck with Victor. Columbia, now owned by the Grigsby-Grunow Company, a radio and refrigerator appliance manufacturer, was a poor third. Kapp had Bing Crosby, who was coming up fast with his movie and radio appearances greatly helping his record sales. Crosby's contract with Brunswick allowed him to terminate his agreement if Kapp ever left the company. At that time this arrangement was unorthodox, but today it would not be considered unusual, as the top ranked artists can write their own tickets.

Business Follies of 1934

FOLLY NO. 1



"PHONOGRAPH RECORDS? they wouldn't take 'em if you gave 'em away!"
(from a February 1934 Victor ad)

As the economy was still sickly, the record companies kept their artists' contracts rather short. This condition worked to Kapp's advantage, as he arranged to have many of the Brunswick artists' contracts terminate within close proximity. When the time came to form Decca Records, Inc. in August 1934, most items were relatively in place. The financing was provided by Edward R. Lewis, head of Decca Record Company, Ltd., England, who was named Chairman of the Board of the new U.S. company. Jack Kapp was President, Eugene F. Stevens Vice President and General Manager, and Milton Rackmil Treasurer. Kapp and Rackmil came directly from Brunswick, Stevens from Columbia (now owned by the American Record Corp.). These four were the founders of Decca Records, Inc. Warner Bros. assisted Decca with a \$60,000 loan and supplied recording and pressing facilities for a one-fifth interest in the company.

Decca began with an excellent artist roster almost all from Brunswick, headed by Bing Crosby and Guy Lombardo. Both artists were highly popular, and now their records were selling at 35¢ in competition with Victor, Brunswick and Columbia selling at the old price of 75¢. This was a tribute to Kapp, for although these artists may have been free to join Decca, they would be leaving a long-time established company to join what was a fledgling operation during the Depression years. Kapp must have felt gratified to have acquired his initial roster.

ARC, now consisting of Columbia as well as Brunswick, countered this wholesale artist defection with grim determination, which resulted in my all-time favorite trade paper ad; it has pictures of the faces of

forty-two of their remaining artists in one Brunswick advertisement. (Note, however, that not all artists pictured were actually Brunswick artists!)

An astute retaliatory move on the part of ARC-Brunswick was made clear in a September 1934 announcement to the trade, but we could not reproduce it clearly enough to read. Radio Journal and Electric Appliance for that month stated that 20 popular sellers by Bing Crosby and Guy Lombardo would be re-released on the 15th as 25¢ Melotone records. The titles had all formerly appeared as 75¢ Brunswicks. Obviously annoyed with two of their leading Brunswick artists going to the 35¢ Decca, ARC flooded the market with cheap Melotones, Perfects, Orioles, Romeos, Banners and Conquerors, all presumably selling below the new Deccas!

Decca encountered some unforeseen technical problems but muddled through 1934 and 1935. Record sales began to pick up during the latter thirties as the big band or swing fad caught on, and Decca fully participated in this renaissance. In December 1938 the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) purchased the American Record Corp. and in 1939 changed the corporate name to Columbia Recording Corp. (CRC). CRC restored the Columbia popular label, which had been dormant since 1936, to flagship status, selling at 50¢, while relegating the former ARC flagship Brunswick label (which it only controlled under license from Brunswick Radio Corp.) to obscurity, although still selling at 75¢. CRC allowed the Brunswick Record Corp., which it no longer wanted, to fall below the required minimum number of 250,000 Brunswick label pressings per year to maintain its license. The Brunswick trademark and all pre-November 17, 1931 masters reverted to Brunswick Radio Corp., which Warner Bros. then sold to Decca Records in 1941. Interestingly, Edward R. Lewis had purchased the English rights to Brunswick from Warner Bros. in 1931 and now owned Brunswick on both sides of the Atlantic. Decca used Brunswick in the 1940s only for its reissue Collectors Series, as at that time it had no need for two major labels.

HENRY KING MILLS BROTHERS		FRANCES LANGFORD CLYDE MCCOY		COMPLETE POPULAR RECORD CATALOG	
DECCA		DECCA			
TED WEEMS JOE SANDERS		VICTOR YOUNG ARTHUR TRACY		BING CROSBY GLEN GRAY-CASA LOMA	
DECCA		DECCA		DECCA	
RILEY-FARLEY FRANK LUTHER		AMBROSE HENRY BUSSE		JIMMY DORSEY BOB CROSBY	
DECCA		DECCA		DECCA	
DECCA RECORDS, INC. 30 WEST 37TH STREET, NEW YORK		LOUIS ARMSTRONG ANDY KIRK		JIMMIE LUNCEFORD CHICK WEBB	

Decca continued to raid the Brunswick artist roster. By 1936, they even had musical director Victor Young!

The Brunswick label was again in the same position in which the Columbia label found itself in after being acquired by ARC in 1934. ARC had an investment in Brunswick and hardly any need for a second major label for popular records. The classical Columbia catalog and label did continue. In 1936 ARC transferred all of its popular artists from Columbia
(text continued p. 13, col. 2)

EVERY ARTIST AN

Artist

JOE MORRISON



CONNIE BOSWELL



PHIL REGAN



THE BOSWELL SISTERS



GRACE MOORE



JAMES MELTON



RUTH ETTING



FRANK PARKER



WAYNE KING



LEO REISMAN



OZZIE NELSON



DUKE ELLINGTON



TED WEEMS



TED FIO-RITO



ANSON WEEKS



HAL KEMP



JIMMIE GRIER



GUS HAENSCHEN



JOHNNY GREEN



DON BESTOR



HENRY KING



FREDDY MARTIN



RED NICHOLS



LUD GLUSKIN



EDWIN F. GOLDMAN



LITTLE JACK LITTLE



HARRY RICHMAN



DICK POWELL



GERTRUDE NIESEN



ARTHUR JARRETT



ETHEL MERMAN



WALTER O'KEEFE



MAE WEST



IRVING AARONSON



OHMAN ARDEN



HELEN MORGAN



LUCIENNE BOYER



CAB CALLOWAY



JACK HYLTON



ABE LYMAN



ROSARD BOURDON



ENRIC MADRIGUERA

BRUNSWICK

*always presenting*THE NATION'S *Select* ENTERTAINERS*offers**Grace Moore*GLAMOROUS SINGING STAR
OF SCREEN • RADIO • OPERA*... in an enchanting record. .*SINGING HER SONG HITS
FROM THE COLUMBIA PICTURE
"ONE NIGHT OF LOVE"6994 { *One Night of Love*
CiribiribiACCOMPANIED BY THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE CHORUS AND
ORCHESTRA UNDER THE PERSONAL DIRECTION OF WILFRED PELLETIER*Brunswick Record Corporation*

Executive Offices 1776 Broadway—NEW YORK CITY • BRANCHES • New York • Chicago • New Orleans • Dallas • San Francisco • Los Angeles

Brunswick's ranks had been thinned considerably when this ad appeared to the trade in the fall of 1934...and note that the Boswells bailed out the following year. Note also that artists such as Ted Weems, Henry King and Lucienne Boyer never actually appeared on Brunswick. At the time of this ad, these artists were all on Columbia. This is a hint, perhaps, that ARC was going to drop the Columbia name (for popular records) a full two years before they actually did.

DECCA DEALS IN DEEDS NOT PROMISES BIG STARS SIGN

for DECCA RECORDS *Exclusively*



ALL NEW RECORDINGS OF THESE GREAT ARTISTS

Now on DECCA RECORDS *only*

BING CROSBY

Favorite of Radio, Stage and Screen—and biggest drawing card of the record world now recording all his newest hits on Decca Records *only*.



TED LEWIS

Maestro of song and rhythm gives you, exclusively through Decca Records, his best music.



GUY LOMBARDO

Dean of melodious music and radio's favorite, now recording his latest smash hits for Decca *only*.



ISHAM JONES

Internationally famous artist offers through Decca exclusively the greatest music of his career.



GLEN GRAY

—and the Casa Loma Orchestra, whose rise to stardom has been hailed from coast to coast.

Ethel Waters
Mills Brothers
Victor Young
Everett Marshall
Frank Crumit
Art Tatum
Moana Serenaders
Lee Wiley
Frank Luther
Justin Ring
Montgomery Quartet
Roy Fox Orchestra
Ambrose Orchestra
Dorsey Brothers
Orville Knapp Orchestra
Chick Webb
Jimmie Lunceford

Earl Hines
Fletcher Henderson
Bradley Kincaid
Claude Hopkins
Louis Panico
Jane Froman
Arthur Tracy
(The Street Singer)
Bob Crosby
Fray and Braggiotti
Muriel Pollock and
Vee Lawnhurst
George Gershwin
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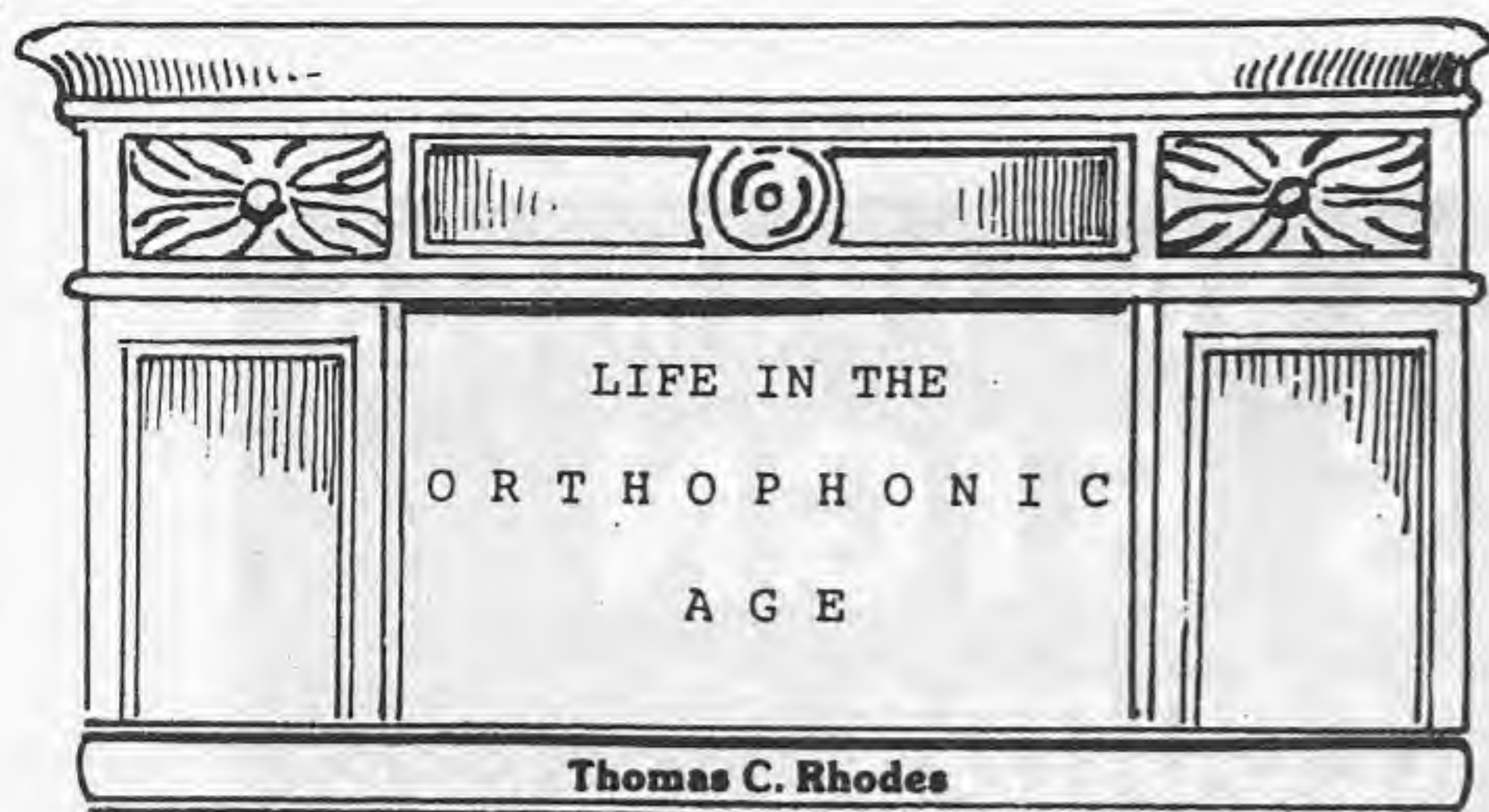
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Collecting Orthophonics
(Special)

- A Collector's Bill of Rights -

Due to some of this writer's more exasperating experiences, this little proposal is offered, not to provoke a stand-off or a pitched battle between dealers and collectors, but to suggest at least a minimum standard of fair dealing. Not only are this columnist's own struggles a source, but the many stories given in letters from fellow collectors, many of long standing in the hobby.

RIGHT ONE - A collector has the right to expect that all talking machine items offered for sale, especially machines, are "stock", meaning as coming from the factory. Mongrel soundboxes, ill-fitting tone arms, cranks from a wholly different make and non-stock hardware simply do NOT pass muster. If any machine, whether it be a Borgia selling for a grand and a half down to a scruffy table model going for 75 dollars is not "stock", the dealer, if aware of the fact, should have the decency to make this known to any asker.

RIGHT TWO - A collector has the right, if it is not already apparent, to be told if a machine or part or record cabinet has been refinished. No matter how well it was done, no refinish job should be passed off as a pristine factory coating. If the seller was the refinisher, he or she should be willing to tell the buyer what sort of ingredients were used. Grossly inauthentic restorations, using modern color stains and poly-synthetic final coats, cannot masquerade as "mint" anything! This rule does not apply where the original finish has simply been cleaned, reflowed or touched up.

RIGHT THREE - A collector has the right to ask for the provenance of any machine, especially a costly model. The dealer, unless acting as a confidential agent, should be willing to supply what he or she knows. If it is indeed from a fine old home, this should be made known to the interested party. All too often, "handyman specials" that have been put together from sundry junkers are passed off as complete originals, which is misleading at the very least. Any buyer, whether it would be for a Ten Fifty, Columbia-Kolster or Edison C-1, has the right to know as much as possible before buying such costly machines.

RIGHT FOUR - All disks, cylinders or other show stock should be clearly marked as to price and condition. (This point has already been raised in the Graphic before.) Overuse of the word "mint" to describe items that are but better than average should be avoided.

Dealers running auctions are very careful to grade all merchandise; the same should be done at phonoventions and antique shows. Along these same lines, the rarity of any record should not be overblown, nor should the content of the grooves be misrepresented. This is especially galling on the mickeymouse labels, when "Mr. X" turns out to be some pedestrian groaner, not "a young Lawrence Tibbett".

RIGHT FIVE - The collector has the right not to be insulted by those representing a machine or crate of records as a markdown, when in truth it is no such thing. Cleaning out a house, a dealer gets a Victrola XIV for 75 dollars. Before the machine is even offered for sale, a green sticker reading \$425.00 is applied, then an orange tag (mimicking discount retail practice) next to it for \$350.00, no less. "Oh, yes...I'm letting it go for barely over my cost" is the sighed obligato. Spare us, please!

RIGHT SIX - A collector has the right to expect decisive transactions when making a serious offer to buy an item, whether it be a Credenza or a suitcase portable of undistinguished lineage. Nothing is more irritating than an offer or bid in "suspended animation"!

RIGHT SEVEN - Lastly, the collector has the right to expect what has been promised or assured. How many times has the reader experienced the following course of events? After scanning the dealer's stand, booth or table, nothing seems to exactly fill the bill. After describing what it is you want, Mr. Dealer then



ORTHOPHONIC VICTROLA

confides: "Yes, I know exactly what you mean. Didn't have room to bring it this time, but if you come back in a week or so, I'll have it then". You return to the fleamarket (or shop) the following week, only to hear: "Oh, really sorry. Couldn't get it...you should see all the stuff in the way. Next time for sure". Shrugging, you promise to return. A couple of weeks later one reappears, only to hear: "Back again! Well, now WHAT was it you were after...?" Grimmacing you again explain the object of your desire, rather emphatically. "Oh, THAT. Well, just follow me". You are lead through the backroom chamber of horrors, a few head bangs and ripped coats freely given as souvenirs, only to be shown some monstrosity that only vaguely resembles your quest. In an irritating attempt at pacification you are told: "Not quite it, eh? Well, just keep checking in. It's bound to show up sooner or later". Yeah, right!

These seven rights, if observed, would do SO much to raise the caliber of the talking machine hobby. While an enjoyable pastime, it can be most upsetting to find that one's flagship machine is really a jigsaw of oddball parts, or that one's recorded gems are really third-rate dross. The participants in our hobby, whether dealers, dealer-collectors or collectors should all aspire to the highest standards to assure both continued enjoyment and sterling reputation for all members, whether just-beginners or longtime veterans.

ADDENDUM

Lest dealers think they have been unfairly singled

out, this essay will also mention some shortcomings on the buying end.

As well as taking sight or hearing about various problems with hobby dealers, this columnist has also seen less than brilliant behavior on the part of talking machine hobbyists. As a counterpart to my list of Rights, a roll call of collectors will now be given.

COLLECTOR TYPE A - This is the dream of the responsible, experienced dealer. This individual is an intelligent, committed person who knows what he or she wants, is well informed and conducts business in a friendly, grownup manner. These collectors generally have already prepared address cards and want lists, are fully knowledgeable on machines and records and have enough funds WITH THEM to carry out mutually agreeable transactions. They appreciate good service and are grateful when a dealer goes out of his way for a special request.

COLLECTOR TYPE B - This is the genius who knows what is wanted but neither enlightens the dealer nor refrains from poring over stock which is of no interest. This person tends to crowd out other buyers and hangs around the booth or stand for an eternity, all the while making no purchase. Silent but deadly.



COLLECTOR TYPE C - Generally a brash newcomer to the hobby, this collector (who just sold off a Fiestaware accumulation) expects an often harried dealer to recite self-evident facts for no good reason. Ignoring clearly marked signs and tags, this individual plies the dealer with tons of repetitive, obtuse questions, taking time away that the dealer could devote to more worthy prospects. After wasting hundreds of hours at shows and meets, this genius will then decide to dump his phono collection in favor of Studebaker hubcaps.

COLLECTOR TYPE D - A trial for even the veteran dealer, this is the diffident (read "fussy") type of buyer who ALMOST buys everything on the stand. Very pleasant, very well meaning, VERY nerve taxing.

COLLECTOR TYPE E - Truly a nightmare in every way. This is the person with an "attitude problem". He literally shouts out questions over the din of a busy stall, expecting instant answers to each one. Without waiting for a reply to the first set, he just fires off another barrage, getting righteously worked up if the dealer does not drop everything to yell back his answers. He wants everything for nothing and carps about "hijack prices" on the most minor items. He purposely makes absurdly low bids or offers, defying the dealer to reject them. Type Es also tend to squawk about the most microscopic cosmetic defects, complaining that everything on the table is junk. Yet at the same time they will expect the dealer (most of whom are NOT lottery winners) to lose money just to pander their outrageous offers. In concert with their general mouthing-off, they will even stoop to denigrating merchandise in front of other customers. "You don't want that, kid...way overpriced. My brother-in-law could get it to you for half that". This sort of boor is a pain and bane to everyone else.

COLLECTOR TYPE F - This is the ear-bending bore with a "Lowell Thomas complex", whose sole purpose in life is to regale dealers and other collectors with yet another

episode of "My Greatest Adventure". To them, shows, phonoventions and fleamarkets provide captive listeners (known as dealers) for their truly herculean exploits. "But, you should have seen when I got that VTLA for 75¢. And they were GLAD to get rid of it". Of course, Type Fs never actually BUY anything; in fact, they haven't bought anything in 20 years. "You see, Son, I've never paid over \$2.35 for ANYTHING..." Unless the heating system breaks down, there is scant use for this rambling raconteur.

In summary, although it might sound a bit Boy-Scoutish, it would make most dealers happy if more buyers would aspire to Type A, rather than to the lesser denizens of the alphabet!

+ + + + +

Correspondence to Tom Rhodes may be addressed to him at 26 Austin Avenue, Apt. #106, Greenville, RI 02828.

(cont. from page 9)

to Brunswick. When the Columbia Broadcasting System purchased the American Record Corp., they had far better reasons for reviving the Columbia label: firstly, name identification with the parent company, as well as outright ownership. Brunswick was licensed with certain restrictions and costs, and by 1939 the value of the pre-November 17, 1931 catalog was of no consideration, as Brunswick Radio received royalties from those pressings. Undoubtedly Decca likewise found it too costly to support two major labels, so Brunswick was not used for current releases until much later.

Bing Crosby, Decca's leading artist, appeared in the 1941 movie "Holiday Inn," in which he sang Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." To this day, the Decca recording remains the biggest selling record of all time, in terms of total sales. Jack Kapp once again had a phenomenal (or in this case, perhaps, a super phenomenal) hit. His other innovations included the first original Broadway cast album "Oklahoma"; using leading Hollywood movie stars such as Ronald Colman doing Dickens' "A Christmas Carol"; and Ginger Rodgers, recording children's stories such as "Alice in Wonderland," which sold very well.

Moody's Manual of Investments listed Edward R. Lewis as Chairman of Decca Records from 1934 until 1946, when his name no longer appeared in the "Officers of the Corporation" listing. Conclusion: as of 1946, Decca Records became fully American owned, with Jack Kapp still President and C.E.O., Milton Rackmil as Vice President and Treasurer (E.F. Stevens died in 1945). The success of Decca Records and Jack Kapp was appreciated far beyond the confines of the record industry. Kapp was the subject of a Life Magazine editorial, March 7, 1949 issue, in which he extolled the virtues of the American free enterprise system.

Kapp continued on until his death on March 25, 1949 at age forty-seven, at the top of his game and the most successful A&R executive of his era. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage, according to Milt Gabler (founder of Commodore Record Stores and label), who was hired by Decca as a producer in 1941. "Jack was a workaholic with a heart condition but would not slow down."

* * * * *

Correction: The caption under the Brunswick list on page 9 of the last issue should refer to the "re-introduction of the Columbia popular label"; During the latter 1930s, ARC had maintained the Columbia label for blue-label standard and classical releases...it had not disappeared completely.

Herman Paikoff can be contacted at 10 Riverside Drive, Binghamton, New York 13905.

FROM THE EDISON VAULT

Ray Wile

In recent years there has been increasing interest in the "post-production" Edison records — records which were manufactured after the company ceased manufacturing regular discs and cylinders in 1929 (see Graphics #75, 80 & 83). Correspondence concerning the lettering for the ends of the first Edison School Test Records was found recently and is here reproduced. Notice that recording had just begun in December of 1929. This series, as discussed in the last issue, eventually included twenty records.

Recording Studio
Orange, N. J.

Attention of Mr. W. Hayes

The following is the wording we desire for the Ediphone Test Records now being recorded:-

# 301	(1)	Courtesy in Business	Edw. J. McNamara	125 W.P.M.
# 302	(2)	Loyalty in Business	Edw. J. McNamara	125 W.P.M.
# 303	(3)	The Courage of Youth	Edw. J. McNamara	125 W.P.M.

J. J. Brown
12/23/29

Curiosity

corner

A Vision in "Tri-Color"!

Herman Paikoff recently received a record in the mail which caused quite a stir. It's a vinyl 10" 45 RPM with a small hole and an impressive label. As Herman writes, "This current Columbia record label (1993) reveals not only a notable and distinguished symbol — the Twin Note or "Magic Notes" trade-mark — but on a simulated teens Columbia label, no less. It's like a surprise visit from an old friend and recalling the good times you had together."



Sound Machine

This may be the world's oldest record

By Richard Cicale

This is the story of two Brooklynites, one buried for 56 years in Green-Wood Cemetery and the other now living in Sheepshead Bay, whose lives are tied together by a fascination with technology and sound.

Francois Lambert, born in France in 1851, was a flamboyant inventor who came to the United States in 1876 and eventually settled with his wife and six children at 192 Prosepect Park Southwest.

CLOSEUP

Lambert's life and work would intertwine with that of Aaron Cramer, a retired teacher whose passion for the past 20 years has been antique sound machines.

Through luck and hard work, Cramer has discovered a recording device built by Lambert in 1878 that may contain the world's oldest playable recording — a find that phonophiles are equating with the discovery of a Gutenberg Bible.

Cramer's infatuation with old phonographs goes back to his days as a shop teacher at Sheepshead Bay High School, where he acquired an appreciation for fine mechanical craftsmanship.

Over the years, he has collected antique recording machines, typewriters, jukeboxes and wax cylinder recordings of Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and many others.

"I think the uniqueness of the ma-



Photo by Richard L. Harbus

Aaron Cramer holds what may go into the record books as the world's oldest recording.

chines and the fact that they lasted for 100 years fascinates me," he said from his home, where he keeps most of his collection. "I have an electric toothbrush that's a year old and doesn't work anymore."

It was that fascination that made him go to a storage depot in the Bronx in April of last year, where he found the small and unusual looking sound machine among the last earthly possessions of Lambert, an inventor he had long been interested in.

Soon after arriving in this country, Lambert made a fortune from de-

signing water meters, typewriters and recording devices. The house he lived in overlooking Prospect Park was a huge mansion known as Lambert House that has since been torn down for park expansion.

In 1878, Thomas Edison entered into an agreement with a Brooklyn clock manufacturer for what was to be a futuristic new clock that would literally tell the time — a talking time piece. Lambert was hired to produce the mechanism that would play a recording of a voice saying "One o'clock," "Two o'clock," and so on.

For technical reasons, the talking clock was never manufactured. Lambert died in 1937 and the mechanism he invented for the model lay in storage for more than 50 years, until discovered by Cramer.

With help from friend and antique dealer Peter Dilg, Cramer has been able to convince most experts that Lambert's recording machine contains the oldest recorded sound in the world.

"There's no question this is the oldest playable recording," said Allen Koenigsberg, editor of *Antique Phonograph Monthly* and a recognized expert in the field. "No one will ever find anything older than this."

The final verification may come when the editors of the "Guinness Book of World Records" finish examining Cramer's proof and decide whether to put the find in their book. If Lambert's recording and Cramer's discovery make it in the record books, it would be fitting recognition to a piece of history made by one Brooklynite and preserved by another.

Richard Cicale is a free-lance writer.

'I think the uniqueness of the machines and the fact that they lasted for 100 years fascinates me. I have an electric toothbrush that's a year old and doesn't work anymore.'

— Aaron Cramer

In Their Own Words

My Lord, What a Morning

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY
MARIAN ANDERSON
(1956)

Marian Anderson was somewhat vague about early dates in her autobiography; indeed, there was even some confusion in the media as to her exact age when she died recently — some said 91, while others indicated 96. But even if she had been successful in shaving off five years, she was no mere school girl when she recorded for Victor in 1924, as her writing implies!

Six titles were ultimately issued by Victor in 1924 and 1925, so Miss Anderson can be forgiven for getting the first coupling mixed up some thirty-two years later.

The changes in our family's life came gradually. Somehow a phonograph runs through my recollections of those early years. The first we ever had in our house was a small portable affair, and it came on loan. It was brought by a young man who was a friend—it would be accurate now to call him my young man, though I would have been hesitant to use that phrase then.

I have been running far ahead of myself. With the borrowed phonograph, King brought some records to my house. There were "Song of the Volga Boatmen," and Galli-Curci singing "Clavellitos" and "Una voce poco fa" from *The Barber of Seville*. This was way back in the days when high C's made no difference to me, and I would sing the coloratura runs and trills right along with Galli-Curci. That little machine sounded magnificent to me, and so did Galli-Curci. Finally the phonograph and records had to be returned, the records in an alarmingly bad state because I had played them so many times.

We did not have a phonograph again until some time later, when Sadie Johnson, a friend in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, gave us one. And that one served until we were able to buy our own. In the meantime, however, I made a record in Camden at the Victor plant. Since we did not have a phonograph at this period, I heard the record for the first time under curious circumstances.

There was a Mr. Pasternak in Philadelphia who was interested in things musical, including the Philharmonic Orchestra, an amateur group not to be confused with the Philadelphia Orchestra, which was then being conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Mr. Pasternak was good enough to take notice of me, and through him I met a Dr. Hirsch, who played with the Philadelphia Philharmonic in his spare time.

I can recall being asked to sing on several occasions. One evening when Mr. Pasternak was among the guests I was asked to sing, and I did "Heaven, Heaven." Mr. Pasternak kept suggesting that I repeat the song. I could not understand why, but I went through the song four times. Then he asked whether I thought I did it the same way each time and whether I felt I could walk into a studio and record it. I said I thought I could, and he arranged the appointment. I don't remember anything about a recording agreement; all I know is that Mr. Boghetti acted for me, and he accompanied me to Camden, where I recorded two songs, "Heaven, Heaven" and "Deep River."

I did not hear the completed record after it was issued. In fact, I was hardly aware that it was available publicly and I had forgotten it completely, I think, by the time we were busy buying furniture for our little house. I remember making our purchases in a store where the salesman was named Mr. Mann. When I chose things that were comparatively expensive he complimented me on my good taste, but no doubt he wondered how a girl of high school age would be able to pay for such things. I might add that we did not intend to spend our last penny on furniture any more than we would have on food or clothes. But we hoped to get good things, and we thought we would be able to pay for them in monthly installments. When Mr. Mann was convinced that I was earning enough money to warrant the commitments we were making, he agreed to let us have the things we wanted. That furniture is still in the little house. The wood and construction were good; we got value for our money.



19227 { Deep River
10-in. list price 75c. { My Way's Cloudy

Marian Anderson
Marian Anderson

First Victor record by this gifted colored contralto, who has been appearing with symphony organizations. Two of the old "spirituals," too fine ever to be forgotten. The artist has a voice of exceptionally pure and rich quality; but more than this, she has the power of sympathy and understanding which alone keep these modest old negro hymns at the higher levels of devotional music. The settings used here are simple, musicianly, and true to American Negro tradition.

Marian Anderson's first Victor actually paired "Deep River" with "My Way's Cloudy"—not "Heaven, Heaven"

We made an impression on Mr. Mann, I suppose. I remember that I once wandered off and left him talking with my sister. When I returned she was smiling, and I wanted to know why. Mr. Mann provided the explanation. "I just told her," he said, "that someday you're going to have the whole family on easy street."

I made occasional visits to this store, either to pay the monthly installments on our furniture or to buy something. Mr. Mann was usually there to give us a cordial greet-

ing. One day my sister and I were standing at the cashier's window when we heard a phonograph in the store start to play. The voice and the song were oddly familiar and oddly strange. The song I knew; it was "Deep River." The voice? There was something in it like mine, and yet I thought it was another singer. Mr. Mann came up, smiling. My heart was jumping and I was flustered, and he had noticed my surprise and discomfort.

"Do you know who's singing?" he asked.

My sister answered, "Oh, yes, it's Marian."

I did not speak, and I could not get out of the store fast enough. I felt palpitations for many minutes after I left.

When we finally had a phonograph of our own and acquired a copy of the record, I could not bring myself to listen to it except when I was all alone. I could not bear to hear my voice coming out of the machine even when only Mother and my sisters were about. I can't explain why.

HERE & THERE

About a year ago, we presented some information from Tom Vendetti about Edison artist Marta de la Torre. Miss de la Torre had been living in Silver Spring, Maryland, at the age of 100 in 1989, but Tom had subsequently lost contact with her. We have since heard from Cristobal Diaz, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, that the former violinist died in 1990.

Ron Dethlefsen is exploring the possibility of reprinting an Edison Disc Motor Repair Manual. He writes: "I'd like collectors to drop me a card if they would be interested in having such a facsimile manual. It will be taken from a mint original copy on loan from the Edison Site. The manual will contain about twenty pages with eight photographs which will allow collectors to reset Diamond Disc machines made between 1915 and 1927 to factory specifications. It covers far more information than do the instruction booklets furnished with the machines in those days. Also included are instructions for installing the electric stop mechanisms used on types C-250 and up. I envision that the facsimile will sell for about \$5.95 postpaid. I hope the price will be low enough that collectors will order two copies, one for the repair bench and one for the bookshelf. To my knowledge, there is no other detailed repair information about Edison Diamond Disc Phonographs in print. Reading this booklet will allow proper operation of machines and will save a lot of records that are now being ground to dust on poorly adjusted machines." Interested parties may drop Ron a card at 3605 Christmas Tree Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93306-1114.

Earlier this spring, a special television episode of "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles" placed Jones in Chicago in the early 1920s (it had to be 1921 or earlier, because Enrico Caruso was spotted in a funeral procession). The same story, however, featured the 1928 Ethel Waters version of "My Handy Man" and Lil Johnson's 1938 "Get 'Em from the Peanut Man"! The film "Chaplin" may likewise have contained several anachronisms, but we did notice him reading the newspaper in the early 1940s; at the top of the page, just as plain

as could be, was an ad for the 1922-24 "humpback" Victrolas. We wonder why producers take such careless liberties with significant details. In the words of the former Vice President, "Hollywood still doesn't get it!"

Allen Koenigsberg has recently reproduced an extremely rare and early phonograph booklet. Originally published in 1889 by the Metropolitan Phonograph Co., the 36-page publication introduced its readers to the recently perfected "Class M" Edison Phonograph, as well as the Bell-Tainter counterpart. There are profuse descriptions of the devices' possibilities, ranging from reproducing "stored-up music and elocution" to giving instructions to employees while the boss is absent. The book is completed with numerous endorse-



TYPE-WRITING FROM PHONOGRAPH-GRAPHOPHONE DICTATION.

ments and testimonials from satisfied users. Readers will recall that this was during the period when machines could not be bought; they were leased by the various North American affiliates, in much the same manner which telephone equipment used to be distributed. Because of its historical significance, this little publication reprint will make a valuable addition to most collections. It is available for 20 first class postage stamps (= \$5.80) from Allen Koenigsberg, 502 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226.

Readers who expect to be in the Midwest later this summer should definitely plan to take in the Michigan Antique Phonograph Society's Phonovention, which will be held on August 20th and 21st in Owosso, Mich. In addition to a good time, the organizers promise entertainment, displays, seminars, a banquet and awards -- not to mention a big flea market. For more information, contact: Phil Stewart, 60 Central Street, Battle Creek, MI 49017.

Finally, congratulations to Ron Hatfield, whose Edison label design (#2) received the most number of votes in our contest. This was by far our most successful and spirited contest, and we thank all those who participated in the designing and voting. Several voters even added comments, such as what styles and typefaces would and wouldn't have been in vogue in 1939. For his efforts, Ron will receive a one year subscription to Vermont Life, the official magazine of the State of Vermont.



Three Massive Destructions of Cylinder Records

by L. Brevoort Odell

In the early 1920's, after school, I would ride my bicycle to second hand stores, junk shops, and salvage bureaus such as the Goodwill Stores to find cylinder records. The sure place to find them was any of the Brooklyn Goodwill Stores, the largest one being on Court Street. Here were thousands of cylinders in a room given over to records. I bought a few, but money was tight.

Aside from the standard size, I bought a Concert size Edison Phonograph with some 80 records, a "hamp-er" full, delivered to our apartment, all for \$8.00! I wish that I had not sold it recently.

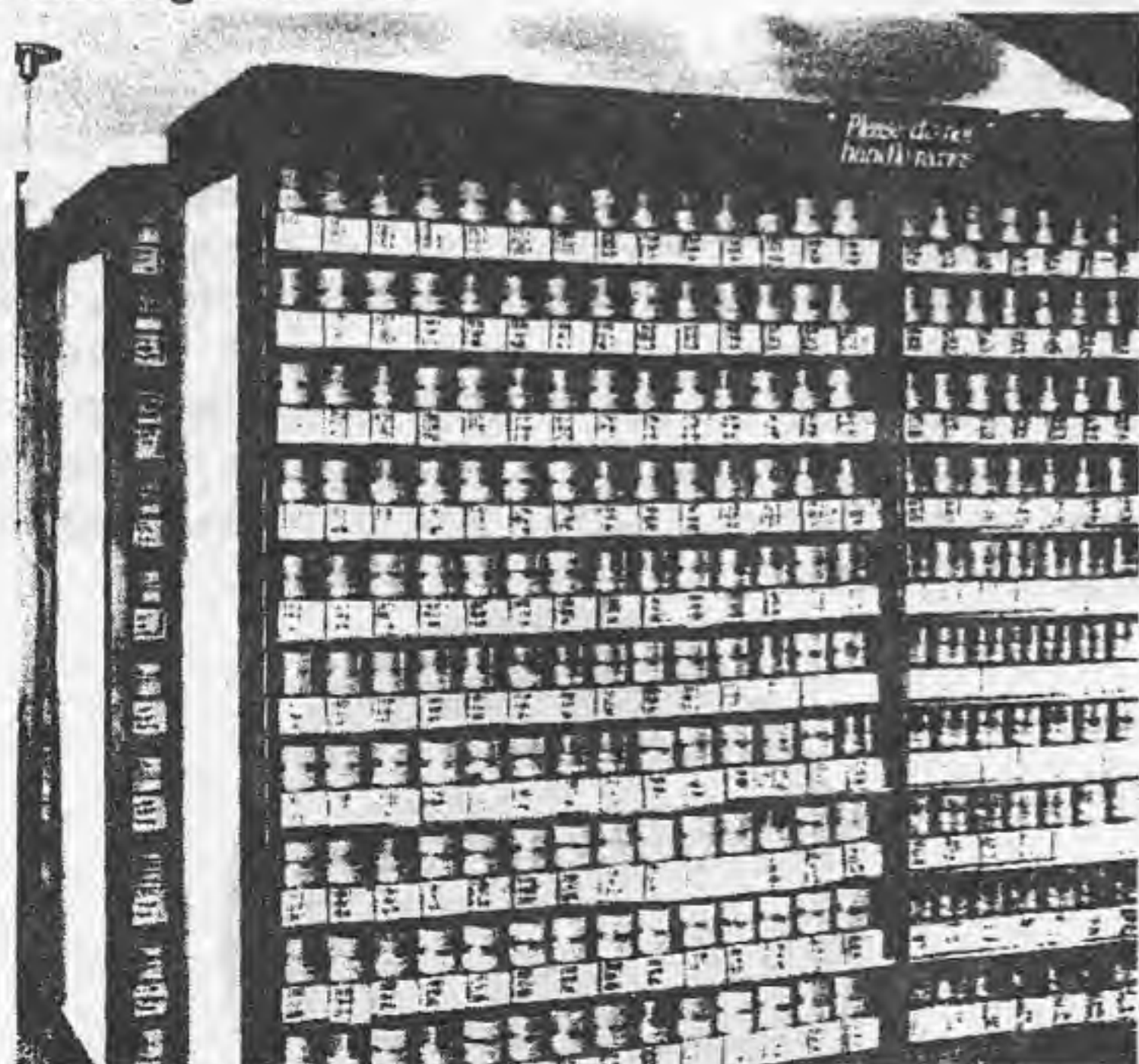
I was going back to the Court Street Goodwill, but found out the building with all those cylinders had burned down! Over eight thousand cylinders lost!

One experience I had in those days which does not have to do with the title of this article may be of interest to record. On Fulton Street, Brooklyn, I stopped at a second hand store and found it was run by an elderly black man. He said his records were down cellar, so he got one candle and we made our way down stairs to the dark cellar.

By the candlelight I came across one two minute record titled "I've Got Your Fingers Crossed, You Can't Touch Me". Hearing the name, the man said, "Why, that's a game I played when I was a child. I'm old now". He was a gentleman and showed me every courtesy. I'll never forget that dealer.

When Edison stopped making all records in 1929, it was a stunning blow to me. The cylinders had been my friends since childhood. We had ordered from each list that came out. You had to order by mail as no dealer kept up with the issues. Even so, they must have pressed only a small number of each selection, and you did not get all you ordered.

I did find a source of supply of the older records in a large sports goods house named Blackman's at 3rd Avenue and 149 Street in New York. There were fully thousands of cylinders, neatly in numerical order on their shelves. They were selling them at 25¢. In addition to domestic cylinders, they had a large number of the foreign series.



Some dealers kept a methodical inventory of Blue Amberol Records

We bought as many at a time as finances allowed. My mother was a good bargain hunter and persuaded the manager, a congenial man, to come down in price to 20¢, then 15¢, and so on, until at last when Blackman's was going out of business in 1935, fifteen records for 25¢!

We had gotten hundreds of Blue Amberols, including the Concert and Royal Purple series. Many times there would be many copies of each record, many of the records that had been cut out by Edison long before they stopped making them, such as Marie Dressler's "Rastus, Take Me Back".

The manager had a little pet dog which did not understand English, but would respond only to German. Dogs are not so dumb.

Shortly after the store closed down, I was sent a letter offering me the remaining stock, estimated at 25,000 records, for \$35. I had no place for them, or even the small price. Depression days. In the windup, Blackman had to hire a trucking company to haul the records to the city dumps as the Sanitation Department refused to take them! I do not know where their Victor discs went, as they handled them also. What a terrible loss.



In 1938, the New York Daily News ran an article about my collection with pictures, and that brought me many contacts, including one of the prominent collectors, Charles Sniffin. He was a very likable man, but eccentric. He would eat so much that he weighed three hundred and fifty pounds, then go to a German spa and take off a hundred pounds in a month. He eventually killed himself doing this. We became good friends, and in the early spring of 1940 he took my wife, my mother and me to Weil's Curiosity Shop in Philadelphia. Entering their place one saw everything from the ceiling strung with snake skins to a large object said to be a

dinosaur egg! On their fourth floor were at least fifty thousand wax cylinder records along with the Blue Amberols.

Charlie had made arrangements to buy some of the records at 5¢ each. The records were all brand new and filed in large boxes, numerically in order on shelves. Every box was filthy, but the records inside were clean. Jack Caidin, the dealer, had been there first and had bought all the opera records. The only two-minute records were in a foreign series. The wax four-minute Amberols were a complete run of all Edison had made. There were as many as ten of the same number.

We got so dirty that our hands were black. My wife and mother brought us something to eat at noon, which we devoured dirt and all. About two o'clock, we had selected some six hundred records, mostly Amberols. There were lots more than we had time to see. We had scarcely looked over the Blue Amberols, and had not finished the wax Amberols, let alone the Indestructibles or the U.S. Everlastings.

It had started to snow, and on our way to New York, the auto skidded and turned completely around! However, neither we nor the records were hurt, but it was a slippery trip back.

We made a second trip in July but Charles was not along. The wax and Blue Amberols were there, but out on a bid so we could not buy any of them, and had to be content with the U.S. Everlastings and the Indestructibles.

In late October, I wrote for an appointment, as you had to make one to see the records. We got back a stunning letter. Weil's had had a terrible fire and ALL the records were destroyed! All...including the wax and Blues that were out on bid. No longer would the rickety old elevator haul one up to see the records, estimated at about 50,000 cylinders.

Weil's did rebuild, but never again would the massive stock be there. They did get in a few hundred two-minute Edisons, but the loss was still one job lot never replaceable.

Perhaps other readers know of similar massive destructions of cylinder records.

BUY, SELL, EXCHANGE AND RENT ANYTHING AND ARTICLES OF VALUE

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Mr. Odell may now be contacted c/o Methodist Manor, P.O. Box 142, Branchville, N.J. 07826.

Notes on the Obituaries

Marian Anderson's first recordings were for Victor in the mid-1920s. All three issues were black label acoustics and did not survive to the October 1926 catalogue. Some ten years later, after international acclaim, she reappeared as a Red Seal artist.

Bob Crosby first appeared on Brunswick in 1933 with Anson Weeks' Orchestra. He subsequently did some fine singing with the Dorsey Brothers on Decca before forming his own band in 1935.

Other Recent Deaths

Mitchell Parrish, 92, wrote the lyrics for many popular songs, including "Sweet Lorraine," "Deep Purple," and "Sophisticated Lady." His greatest success came when he penned the words for Hoagy Carmichael's "Star Dust."

Billy Eckstine, whose M-G-M 78s of a later vintage sold millions of copies, died recently at the age of 78.

MARIAN ANDERSON 1897 — 1993

Her voice brought down barriers

By David Patrick Stearns
Gannett News Service

Throughout the many racial battles she fought throughout her long lifetime, singer Marian Anderson — who died Thursday at age 96 — always maintained a regal dignity. She was not known to speak out against racism. She simply sang with her deep, rich, shimmering contralto voice that was ever so faintly tinged with sorrow, and let that carry her across numerous racial barriers.

Anderson, who suffered a stroke last month, died at the Portland, Ore., home of her nephew, James DePreist, the Oregon Symphony's music director. She stopped singing publicly in 1965, but had continued making personal appearances.

Born in Philadelphia, Anderson's talent was apparent at an early age, though only through a combination of luck, hard work and financial support from the black community was she able to have voice lessons and eventually receive the kind of European vocal training that talented white singers took for granted at that time.

But once she began singing in Europe, her career took off. When she sang in Salzburg in 1935, legendary conductor Arturo Toscanini declared, "A voice like yours comes only once every 100 years."

When she sang for composer Jean Sibelius in Finland, he remarked, "My roof is too low for you!" Her reputation grew so fast that she was invited to sing in Nazi Germany until the officials realized she was not Aryan.

Only then did she return to the United States and receive the sort of recognition that was due her. However, barriers continued, the most famous being in 1939, when she was not permitted to sing at Washington, D.C.'s Constitution Hall. A scandal followed, resulting in a historic concert: Anderson singing outdoors at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday to an audience of 75,000.

In 1955, she became the first black singer to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, but her opening in Verdi's "Masked Ball" was a bittersweet victory. She had not been trained in opera, and at that point, her voice was past its best.

She continued to sing her characteristic mixture of German songs and spirituals. Long after she retired to a farm near Danbury, Conn., which she left only in the past year or so to be near her relatives, her recordings continued to be reissued. They reflect a singer with rare dignity and depth, almost severe in a complete lack of flamboyance. Anderson got to the essence of the music she sang.

OBITUARIES

New York Times, March 11, 1993

Bob Crosby, 80, Big-Band Leader; A Brother of Bing

LA JOLLA, Calif., March 10 (AP) — Bob Crosby, a popular swing-era band leader who was a younger brother of the singer Bing Crosby, died on Tuesday at Scripps Memorial Torrey Pines Convalescent Hospital. He was 80 and had lived in La Jolla until moving to the nursing home two months ago.

His son Kris said the cause was cancer.

Mr. Crosby led big bands from 1935 to 1942, starting the Bob Cats, an eight-piece band-within-the-band, during that time. He sang but did not play an instrument.

His bands were known for swing and Dixieland sounds. The Bob Cats' hit records included "Big Noise From Winnetka," "South Rampart Street Parade" and "March of the Bobcats."

Invited to Lead a Band

The youngest of five Crosby brothers, Bob Crosby was born in Spokane, Wash., and attended Gonzaga University in Washington State. He started his career with the Anson Weeks orchestra. In 1935, 11 New York musicians asked him to be their leader, and within three years the Bob Crosby Orchestra was playing in supper clubs and night spots across the country.

The Bob Cats then moved on to Hollywood, appearing in movies including "Let's Make Music," "As Thousands Cheer," "See Here, Private Hargrove" and "Pardon My Rhythm."



Bob Crosby

Although his brother Bing, who was nine years older, was not involved in the formation of the Crosby orchestra, it was often billed as the band of "Bing Crosby's brother."

During World War II, Mr. Crosby spent 18 months with the Marines, organizing and touring with bands throughout the Pacific.

Mr. Crosby disbanded the Bob Cats in 1942. But he reassembled them for a Dixieland concert in Los Angeles in 1951 and played with members of the group periodically over the next 40 years. He and some original members of his band played at concerts, balls and conventions until he fell ill last year, his son said.

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Annual dues are \$20.00 (outside Canada \$20.00 U.S.) Membership runs from September through August. Direct inquiries to: Bill Pratt, CAPS, 122 Major Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2L2 Canada.

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